

Plan of Conservation and Development 2014 Draft

V. ACHIEVING THE VISION

G. TRANSPORTATION

A. INTRODUCTION

An essential ingredient to maintaining a high quality of life in Newtown is a safe and efficient transportation system, consistent with the Town's desired community character. Newtown's transportation system is primarily comprised of a network of town roads, state highways, a limited sidewalk system, recreational trails, limited mass transit service and rail freight service, all of which combine to provide for intra-town and inter-town travel needs.

This portion of the POCD describes the current conditions of Newtown's transportation system, highlight areas for action and identify future needs.

B. FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF NEWTOWN'S ROADWAYS

There are five levels of roadway classification that are used to define the use characteristics of roads within Newtown. These classifications include:

- Principal Arterial- Interstate,
- Principal Arterial,
- Minor Arterials,
- Collectors Roads- Major and Minor, and
- Local Roads.

The classification of a road may change along different segments of its length and in some instances may operate differently than its assigned functional classification. Roadway classifications are tied to various Federal, State/Regional and local funding programs for planning, engineering, construction and maintenance activities. The Federal/State functional classification process also incorporates urban and rural area designations, which affect the distribution of Federal transportation monies.

Classification Inconsistencies: There are numerous inconsistencies between the functional classification of roads by the Town of Newtown and by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT). This issue was raised in the 1993 POD and has not been resolved. This issue is important to the Town because the functional classification used by ConnDOT can affect transportation planning policies and programming and as well as eligibility for ConnDOT and Federal transportation improvement monies.

Newtown was one of Connecticut's faster growing municipalities between 1990 and 2010. The Town should continue efforts to work with the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials (HVCEO) to pursue adjustments to ConnDOT's functional classification of roads in Newtown to more accurately reflect current highway conditions. Classification of the roadways affects the funding received. The Town will continue to use the functional classification map contained in the 1993 POD until these adjustments have been completed to the Town's satisfaction.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

ROUTE 25

Route 25 is an arterial highway that begins at Route 7 in Brookfield and extends southeast to I-95 in Bridgeport. This approximately 9½ mile long stretch of Route 25 is the longest highway in Newtown and runs from the Brookfield border in Hawleyville along Hawleyville Road and then turns and runs along Main Street to the Monroe border in Botsford. Numerous businesses along Route 25 have created multiple curb cuts that can cause conflicts with traffic. In addition heavy traffic flows along Route 25 from the Danbury area as the main route to the Bridgeport area.

Changes in average daily traffic (ADT) volumes from 2001 to 2010 measured on five sections of Route 25 in Newtown were inconsistent as they both increased and decreased from 2001 to 2010. Traffic between the Flagpole and Route 302 increased 11.72% from 12,800 to 14,300 and traffic at Exit 9W Bound Ramps of I-84 and Barnabas Road increased 5.22% from 11,500 to

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12,100. The decade before the traffic between the Flagpole and Route 302 decreased 20.99% from 16,200 to 14,300 while traffic between Exit 9W Bound Ramps and Barnabas Road increased 26.4% from 1991 to 2001. Decreases in traffic volume occurred between I-84 East and West bound exit ramps by a negative 12.15% from 10,700 in 2001 to 9,400 in 2010 and South of Mile Hill Road by a negative 6.93 % from 20,200 to 18,800.

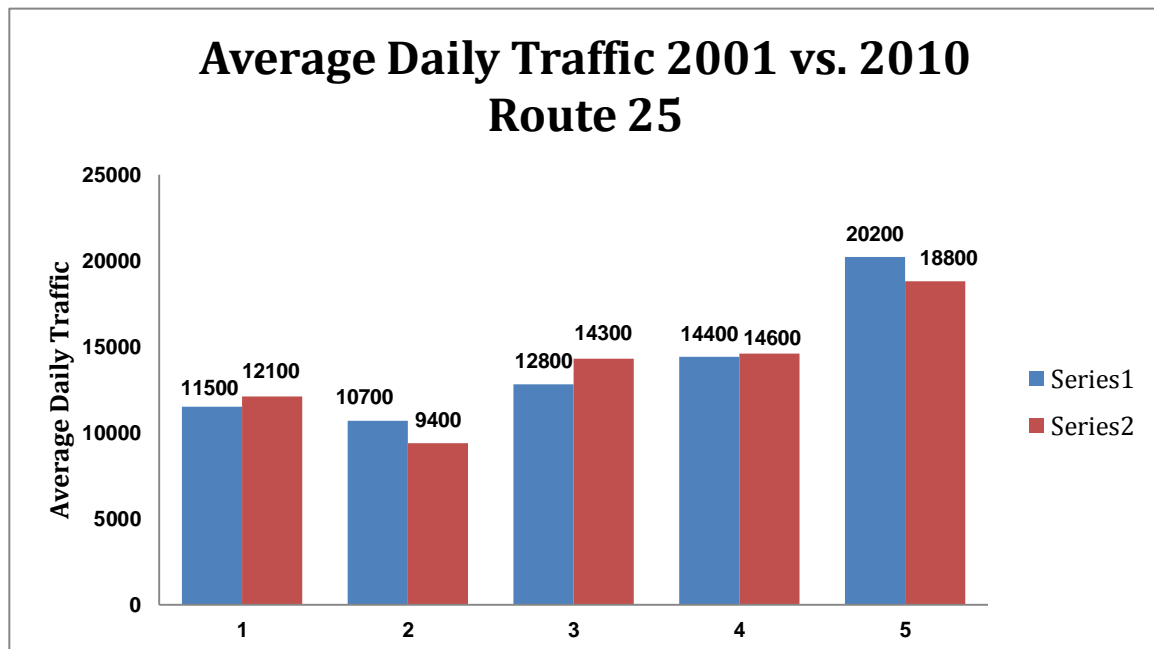
Newtowners would find it hard to believe that traffic decreased on South of Mile Hill Road on the South Main Street portion. Traffic along South Main Street often backs up due to construction and left turning vehicles. New left turn lanes installed to serve the newer shopping centers help combat the congestion, but left turn lanes to serve the older shopping areas would help relieve many of the traffic back ups especially during rush hour traffic.

The following table and chart represents Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes for selected portions of Route 25 from the Brookfield town line to the Monroe town line.

Table 20 Average Daily Traffic Trends for Route 25

	AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC TRENDS	Average	Daily	Traffic	Percent	Change
	ROUTE 25	1991	2001	2010	1991-2001	2001-2010
1	I-84 Exit 9W Bound Ramp and Barnabas Road	9,100	11,500	12,100	26.40%	5.22%
2	Between I-84 Exit 9 E&W Bound Ramps	9,700	10,700	9,400	10.30%	-12.15%
3	Between the Flagpole and Route 302	16,200	12,800	14,300	-20.99%	11.72%
4	Route 302 to Mile Hill Road	15,500	14,400	14,600	-7.10%	1.39%
5	South of Mile Hill Road	17,400	20,200	18,800	16.09%	-6.93%

Chart 6 Average Daily Traffic Trends for Route 25



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ADT volumes ranged from 7,800 ADT at the Brookfield town line, 12,300 ADT just north of the Flagpole, 18,800 ADT just south of Mile Hill Road and 17,800 ADT at the Monroe town line.

While it is classified as a minor arterial from the Brookfield town line to the Flagpole and a major arterial from the Flagpole to the Monroe town line, Route 25 also functions as the Town's Main Street and as a local service road with numerous curb cuts that provide access to the many businesses, institutions and residences located along its length in Newtown.

Route 25 Expressway: For many years, ConnDOT planned for the construction of a Route 25 expressway that would have provided expressway linkage between I-84 in Newtown and I-95 in Bridgeport. Portions of this expressway were constructed, extending from the Route 8 Expressway in Bridgeport to the vicinity of Route 111 in northern Trumbull. Over the years, many route alignment alternatives were considered to complete the balance of the expressway to I-84 in Newtown. Extensive environmental analyses were conducted and there were numerous public meetings to discuss the needs for and consequences of extending the expressway northward through Monroe and Newtown. In 1993, ConnDOT announced that it would no longer pursue the completion of the expressway, due to a lack of sufficient financial resources.

Route 25 Widening: In 1998, ConnDOT proposed the widening of Route 25, within its current ROW, to a four lane cross section from Route 111 in Trumbull to Wasserman Way in Newtown. Neither the Town nor the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials (HVCEO) have supported this proposal. This widening project cannot proceed, using Federal monies, without HVCEO's endorsement. In the 2002 Inventory of Newtown Traffic Issues, HVCEO suggests that Newtown "advocate for intersection oriented safety improvements along the (Route 25) corridor one by one, as can be justified by traffic engineering studies." The intersections identified are Swamp Road, Botsford Hill Road, Elm Drive North and South, Pecks Lane North and South, Borough Lane, and the Route 302 and Glover Avenue intersection. The Newtown Traffic Unit also recommends identifying curb cut areas with high accident rates and installing turning lanes in those areas. This would help alleviate the numerous rear-end collisions that occur as vehicles make left hand turns into businesses.

Both traffic signals and turning lanes have been added for several new businesses that have been built along the South Main Street portion of Route 25. This also facilitates breaks in the traffic flow that eases the access of cars from side roads onto Route 25. See the Curb Cut Management Plan dated January 20, 2010.

Route 25 South Safety Issues: Previous analysis of Route 25 from the Flagpole to the Monroe town line resulted in recommendations for intersection improvements and a curb cut management plan to address safety issues. A curb cut management plan was undertaken and the report with recommendations was published in January of 2010. The Newtown Planning and Zoning Commission has adopted the curb cut management plan. The Route 25 intersections recommended for improvements to address safety issues and, in some instances, address intersection capacity issues include: Swamp Road; Botsford Hill Road; Elm Drive, north and south; Pecks Lane, north and south; Borough Lane; and Route 302/Glover Avenue. Several of the recommended intersection improvements are minor in nature, such as re-striping of lanes to improve turning movements and might be accomplished by ConnDOT District 4 working directly with the Town of Newtown.

Route 25- Hawleyville: In 1997 the Town of Newtown, working with HVCEO, completed the Hawleyville Transportation and Development Study. This report addressed the land use and transportation issues associated with the Town's longstanding desire to encourage economic

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development on the lands near the I-84 Exit 9 interchange. The land use and transportation recommendations of this analysis, including intersection improvements and a curb cut management plan, were subsequently incorporated into Newtown's Plan of Development. ConnDOT's I-84 Corridor Study, completed in 2000, updated recommendations for the configuration of I-84's Exit 9 ramps and associated Route 25 intersection improvements.

In 2000, Newtown applied to ConnDOT for assistance in planning for improvements to the intersection of Route 25 with Currituck and Obtuse Roads. That analysis was recently completed and ConnDOT concluded that signalization of this intersection was not currently needed. Any future improvements to the design of this intersection will be affected by the presence of a former schoolhouse, listed on the National Register of Historic Sites and two natural gas transmission lines, all located on the north side of the intersection.

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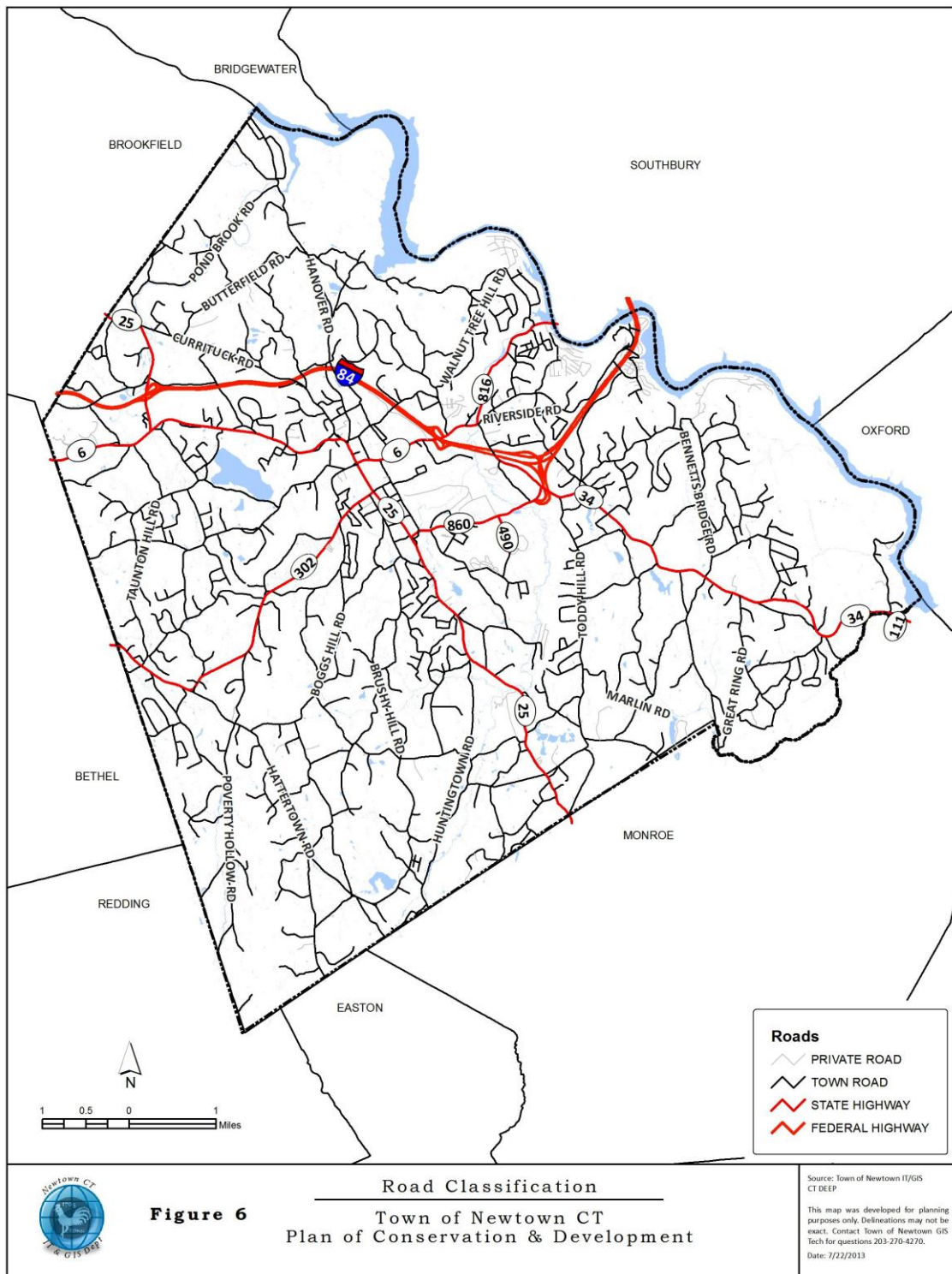


Figure 14 Current Functional Road Classifications

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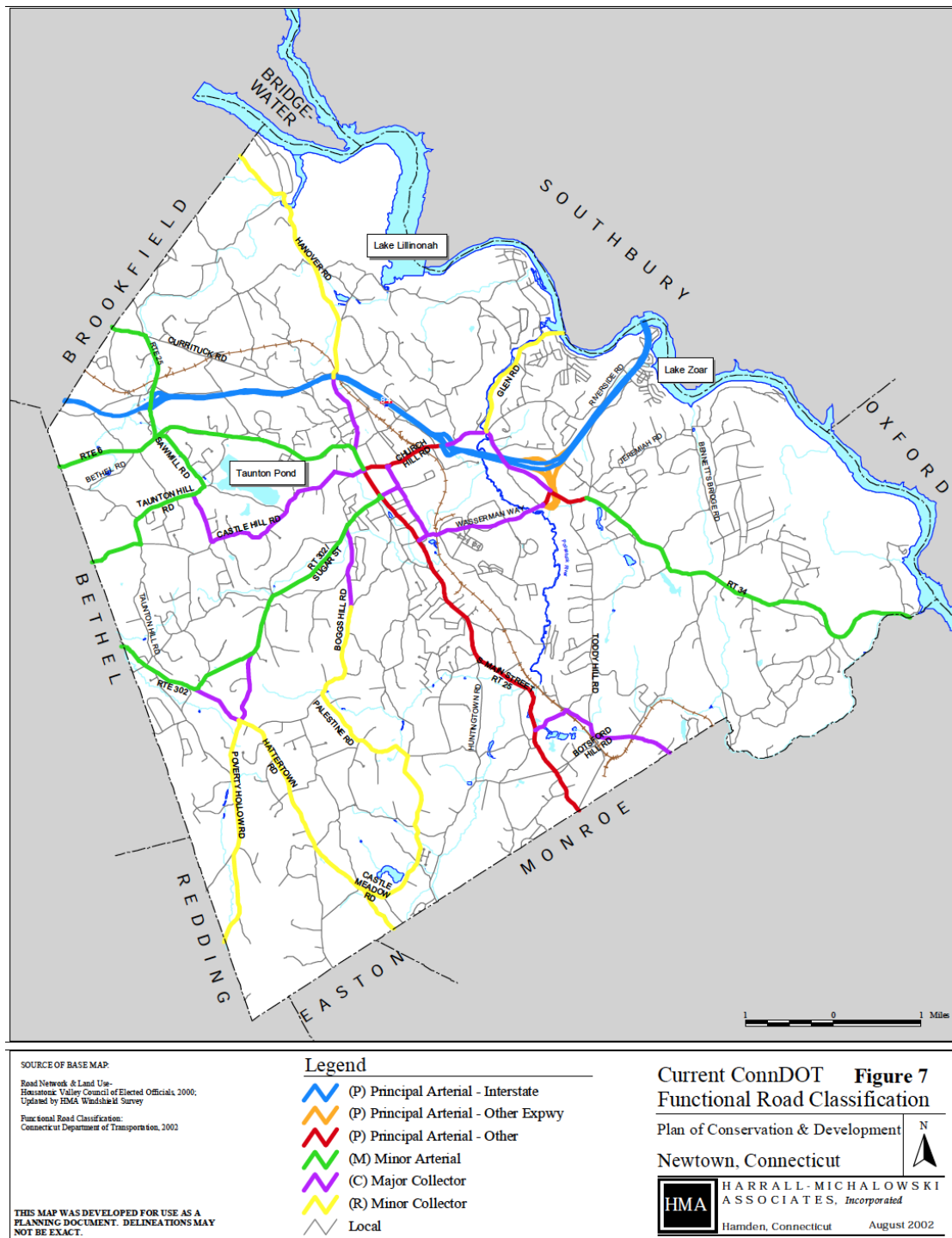


Figure 15 Current ConnDOT Functional Road Classifications

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Route 6

Route 6 is a two lane arterial roadway that enters Newtown at the Bethel town line as Mount Pleasant Road and proceeds eastward, joining Route 25 in Hawleyville and becoming Main Street near its intersection with School House Hill Road. At the Flagpole, Route 6 proceeds down Church Hill Road to join I-84 at Exit 10.

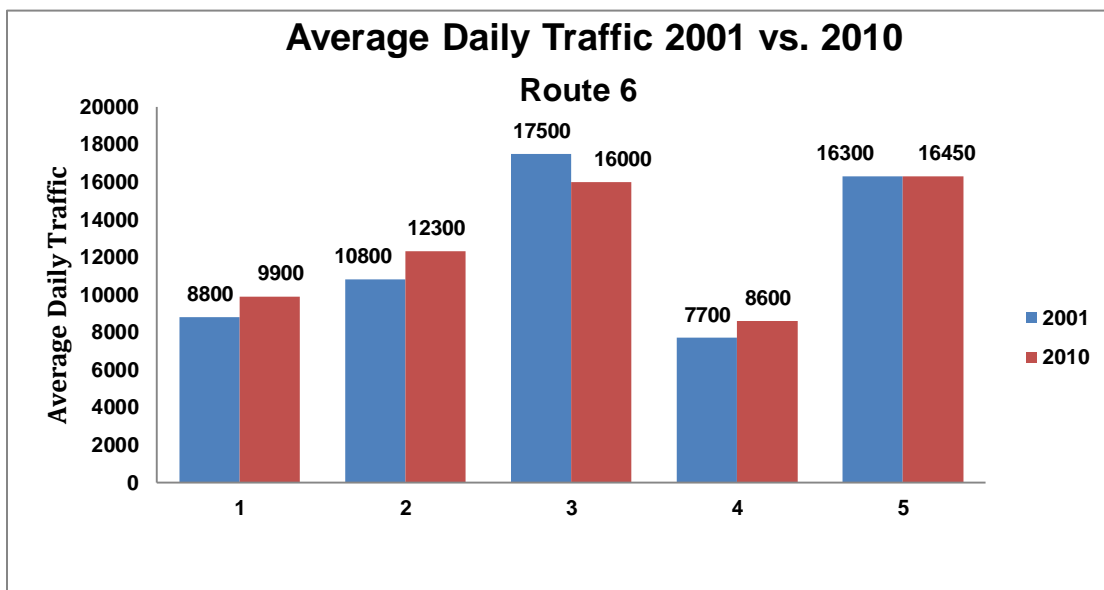
Average daily traffic (ADT) volumes on Route 6 in 2010 ranged from 9,900 ADT at the Bethel town line, 12,300 at the northern intersection with Route 25, 16,000 ADT just north of the Flagpole, 8,600 between the Flagpole and Queen Street on Church Hill Road and 16,450 ADT just east of Commerce Road before the I-84 ramps.

Changes in average daily traffic (ADT) volumes from 2001 to 2010 measured on five sections of Route 6 in Newtown increased on 4 of the 5 sections and by double digits on 3 of the sections as shown in Table 21 and Chart 7. Traffic decreased only along Main Street from Currituck Road to the Flag Pole. The declining traffic since 1991 from Queen Street to the I-84 on ramp is probably due to the recessionary pressures starting in 2008.

Table 21 Average Daily Traffic Trends for Route 6

AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC TRENDS		Average Daily Traffic			Percent Change	
	ROUTE 6	1991	2001	2010	1991-2001	2001-2010
1	Bethel Town Line		8,800	9,900		12.50%
2	Route 25 Intersection, West end	9,500	10,800	12,300	13.68%	13.89%
3	Main Street: Currituck Road to the Flag Pole	15,400	17,500	16,000	13.64%	-8.57%
4	Church Hill Rd: Flag Pole to Queen Street	11,000	7,700	8,600	-30.00%	11.69%
5	Church Hill Rd: Queen Street to I-84 Onramp	18,600	16,300	16,450	-12.37%	0.92%

Chart 7 Average Daily Traffic Trends for Route 6



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ConnDOT has given Route 6 the functional classification of Minor Arterial from the Bethel town line to the Flagpole and the classification of Major Arterial from the Flagpole to I-84. While Route 6 has the classification of an arterial road, a portion also functions as the Town's Main Street and as a busy local service road along Church Hill Road, with numerous curb cuts that provide access to the businesses, institutions, schools and residences fronting on this highway.

Route 6- Hawleyville: The 1997 Hawleyville Transportation and Development Study that addressed land use and transportation issues in this area of Newtown made recommendations for intersection improvements and included a curb cut management plan. This report concluded that the Hawleyville intersection of Routes 6 and 25 will need to be upgraded to accommodate the implementation of the economic development activities planned for this area.

Route 6- Main Street: ConnDOT's Traffic Accident Surveillance Report (TASR) does not indicate any major problem intersections or road segment issues on Route 6 from the Bethel town line until reaching the Flagpole. The Flagpole intersection also involves Route 25 and is discussed below as a separate road issue. Pedestrian activity is an important Main Street consideration. Main Street has attractive sidewalks setback from Route 6. However, pedestrian crossing of Route 6 is a challenge, due to the width of the road and the volume and speed of traffic. The Town, working with ConnDOT has achieved good pavement markings and signage, alerting motorists of pedestrian activity and encouraging pedestrians to cross in marked crosswalks. The Newtown Police Department has also implemented education and enforcement activities to improve pedestrian safety. Any proposals for the improvement of the Flagpole intersection should include recommendations that address pedestrian mobility and safety along Main Street and Church Hill Road, linking with Queen Street.

Route 6- Church Hill Road: The portion of Route 6 between the Flagpole and I-84 is designated by ConnDOT as a major arterial. It also functions as one of Newtown's busier streets by directly serving many retail businesses, the Hawley School, Queen Street and its shopping areas and by connecting to the many businesses located on Commerce Road and Edmond Road. This portion of Route 6 provides two lanes of travel, with turn lanes provided at the Queen Street and Commerce Road intersections

Route 6 also provides access to Interstate 84 at Exit 10. A curb cut management plan was prepared by HVCEO in 1988 for this segment of Route 6 but has not been incorporated into the Borough or Town's zoning regulation.

For many years, the section of Route 6/Church Hill Road from Commerce Road easterly to I-84 Exit 10 has been at the top of the Housatonic Valley Region's list of most problematic road segments, in terms of traffic safety. The high accident rates in this area have been attributed to the combination of high traffic volumes and numerous turning movements. In 2000, Newtown requested State assistance to address this safety issue and ConnDOT subsequently proposed improvements to this segment of Route 6. The proposed design included new on and off ramp configurations, road widening, multiple turn lanes and a median strip extending up Church Hill Road through the new intersection.

The project proposed for Church Hill Road around the Exit 10 on and off ramps to Interstate 84 has been scaled back in 2012. Access Improvements to commercial developments in the area, including the alignment of Edmond and Commerce Roads, however will still occur. Federal earmarks at risk for expiration to fund the original state Department of Transportation initiative are still available for the downscaled project. The balance of any costs will come through a grant from the regional planning agency. Most of the work will involve shifting the course of Edmond Road

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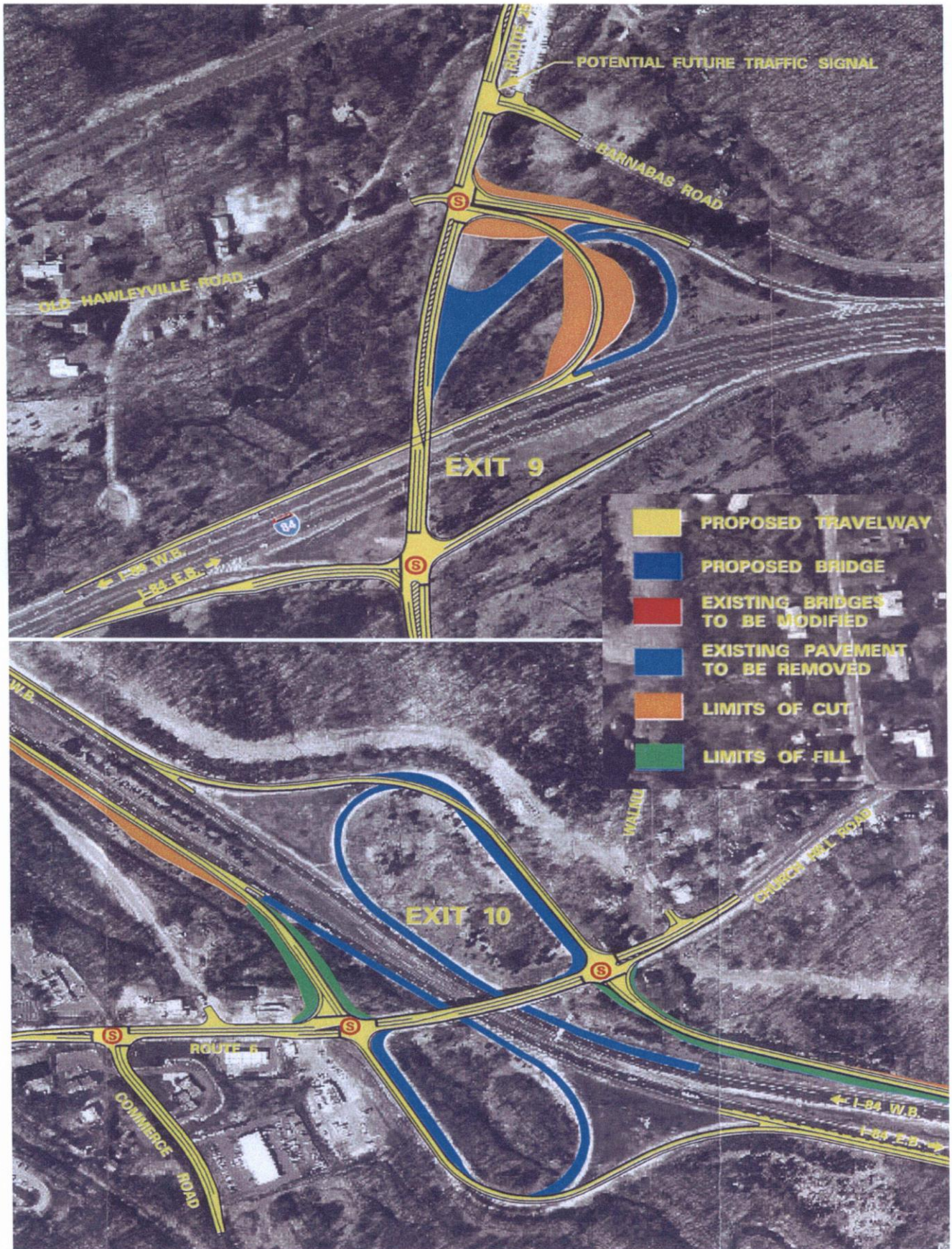
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as it approaches its current Church Hill Road intersection, to a path that will have it intersecting with Church Hill at Commerce Road. Funding is sufficient also for some modest road widening to enhance sight lines and safety between the new intersection and the on and off ramps to Exit 10. An analysis of the scaled back project determined that it will still have sufficient safety impact and improve traffic flow on the state roadway. The new traffic patterns and improvements will boost the commercial appeal of this site. The current configuration has been an impediment to commerce in this area.

Route 6 – I-84 Exit 10: In 2000, ConnDOT concluded an analysis of the need to upgrade I-84 from the New York border to the Housatonic River. This study calls for the widening of I-84 to three travel lanes in each direction, with significant interchange improvements. Improvements proposed for Exit 10 are designed to convert the interchange to a modified “diamond” configuration to address capacity and safety issues. This plan is still in effect but a start date has not been set.

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EXCERPTS FROM THE CONN DOT 2000 I-84 UPGRADING
PLAN FOR EXIT 9 (TOP) AND EXIT 10 (BOTTOM).

Figure 16 ConnDOT Proposals for Improvements to I-84 Exits 9 & 10

Source: HVCEO 2002
Inventory of Newtown
Traffic Issues

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Route 302

Route 302 is a two-lane roadway entering Newtown from the west at the Bethel town line, as Dodgingtown Road, and proceeding east, becoming Sugar Street and ending at Route 25 (South Main Street) in the Borough of Newtown. Average daily traffic (ADT) volumes on Route 302 in 2010 ranged from 6,700 ADT west of Hattertown Road, 4,000 east of Hattertown Road, 6,000 east of Key Rock Road, 8,000 west of Boggs Hill Road, 8,900 east of Boggs Hill Road and 8,900 just west of Elm Drive and Route 25. Traffic on all 6 sections of Route 302 decreased significantly from 2001 to 2010 as shown in Table 22 and Chart 8. The decrease is attributed to the down economy.

ConnDOT has given Route 302 the functional classification of Minor Arterial from the Bethel town line to its intersection with Route 25. As such, this arterial connects the center of Newtown with the center of Bethel. This low volume State road provides access to several small commercial uses and the Dodgingtown hamlet near the Bethel town line. Route 302 also connects with numerous Town roads that provide access to western Newtown and passes through a very scenic area containing two operating dairy farms.

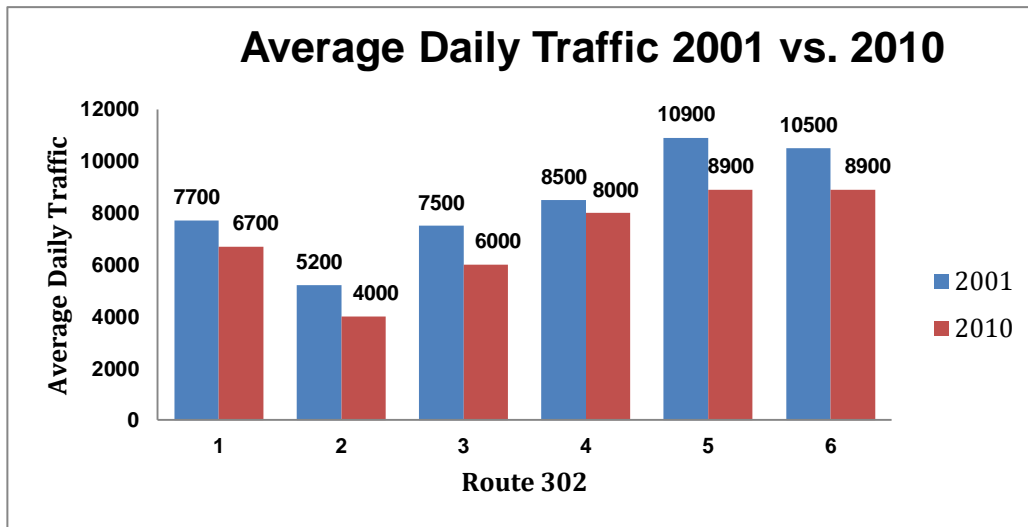
The Route 302 intersections with Hattertown Road and Key Rock Road have been identified as possessing alignment and/or sight line safety issues. These problems are of such a nature that it may be possible to address them through the coordinated efforts of Newtown's engineering and public works personnel working with ConnDOT's District IV staff.

Table 22 Average Daily Traffic Trends for Route 302

AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC TRENDS		Average Daily Traffic			Percent Change	
ROUTE 302		1991	2001	2010	1991-2001	2001-2010
1	West of Hattertown Road	NA	7,700	6,700		-12.99%
2	East of Hattertown Road	NA	5,200	4,000		-23.08%
3	East of Key Rock Road	NA	7,500	6,000		-20.00%
4	West of Boggs Hill Road	NA	8,500	8,000		-5.88%
5	East of Boggs Hill Road	NA	10,900	8,900		-22.47%
6	West of Elm Drive and Route 25	NA	10,500	8,900		-15.24%

Chart 8 Average Daily Traffic Trends for Route 302

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Route 34

Route 34 is a two lane arterial roadway that enters Newtown from the south at the Monroe town line as Berkshire Road and proceeds northwesterly, ending at the I-84 mainline overpass. ConnDOT has given Route 34 the functional classification of Minor Arterial. Route 34 connects Newtown with the lower Naugatuck Valley, the greater New Haven area and I-95.

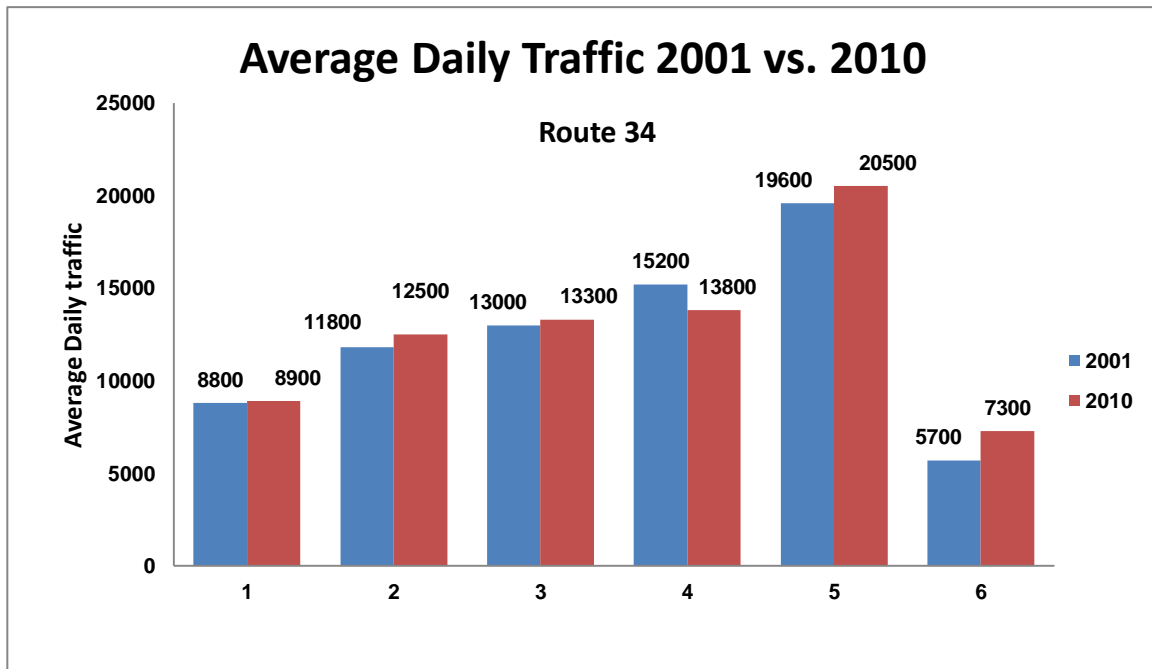
Average daily traffic (ADT) volumes on Route 34 in 2010 ranged from 8,900 ADT at the Monroe town line, 12,500 south of High Rock Road, 13,300 south of Pole Bridge Road, 13,800 between Pole Bridge Road and Toddy Hill Road, 20,500 between Toddy Hill Road and Wasserman Way and 7,300 just northwest of Wasserman Way. The changes in traffic volume from 2001 to 2010 is shown in Table 23 and Chart 9. Traffic west of Wasserman Way increased significantly by 28.07% from 2001 to 2010 probably due to the opening of the Reed 5-6 Intermediate School, the Newtown Youth Academy and the Town Municipal Center during this time period.

Table 23 Average Daily Traffic Trends for Route 34

	AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC TRENDS	Average Daily Traffic			Percent Change	
	ROUTE 34	1991	2001	2010	1991-2001	2001-2010
1	Monroe Border	NA	8,800	8,900		1.14%
2	High Rock Road	NA	11,800	12,500		5.93%
3	Pole Bridge Road	NA	13,000	13,300		2.31%
4	Toddy Hill Road East	NA	15,200	13,800		-9.21%
5	West of Toddy Hill	NA	19,600	20,500		4.39%
6	West of Wasserman Way	NA	5,700	7,300		28.07%

Chart 9 Average Daily Traffic Trends for Route 34

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Route 34 Bridge: An issue that may affect the future utilization of this roadway is a ConnDOT proposal to improve the bridge crossing of the Housatonic River. Route 34 currently crosses the Housatonic River on top of the Stevenson Dam, which is located in Monroe approximately 1.25 miles south of the Newtown town line. The narrowness of the roadway on top of the dam, combined with the short turning radii of the approaches at either end of the bridge and the curve in the roadway near the east end of the dam prohibit the side by side passage of large tractor trailer trucks in these three areas of the bridge. On occasion, opposing trucks must back away from one another to enable passage over the dam. Route 34 represents the most direct route for trucks traveling between the New York State/Danbury I-84 corridor and the New Haven/I-95 area.

The state Department of Transportation (DOT) is now considering building a new, less costly, Route 34 bridge across the Housatonic River downriver of the hydroelectric Stevenson Dam, instead of constructing a new span upriver of the dam, as has been in the planning stages for more than decade. The DOT's complex existing plans to construct a new bridge about 250 feet upriver of Stevenson Dam in the Lake Zoar section of the river has long been under review by the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

The site upriver of the dam proposed for a new bridge would require the installation of steel-reinforced concrete bridge pylons extending downward through 60 feet of water and also downward through 30-foot-thick river sediments to reach anchoring points in bedrock. The river sediments are contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's), mercury, and lead, thus complicating sediment control during bridge construction. Floating cranes would be needed to construct a bridge upriver of the dam.

The building of a new bridge over the Housatonic River will likely result in increased truck traffic on Route 34.

Route 34 –The Hill: Route 34 is quite unique in Newtown and the Housatonic Valley Region in that there are no commercial businesses fronting on this State highway from the Monroe town

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line to just east of Pole Bridge Road, a distance of nearly 5 miles. This section of Route 34 passes over a hill that presents a significant climb for heavily loaded trucks traveling north bound. Trucks often slow to 25 miles per hour as they proceed upgrade, causing significant backups of following traffic during morning peak flows. Consideration was given to adding a slow vehicle lane to permit passing, however this option was rejected due to the taking of residential front yards required to accommodate the additional lane. If the proposed upgrade of Route 34's crossing of the Housatonic River does result in additional truck traffic, it can be anticipated that the idea of adding climbing lanes on this section of Route 34 will be raised once again.

Route 34- Pole Bridge Road to Wasserman Way: The section of Route 34 from Pole Bridge Road to Wasserman Way has Newtown's second highest traffic volumes (for non-expressway roads), as well as two curves, changes in roadway elevation, poor sightlines and intersections with two busy town roads. North bound morning peak hour traffic on Route 34 frequently backs up from south of Pole Bridge Road, through the Toddy Hill Road intersection and through the intersection of Wasserman Way, to the I-84 Exit 11 on-ramp. South bound traffic on Route 34 backs up behind vehicles turning left into Pole Bridge Road, on a narrow corner with poor sight lines.

Route 34 – I-84 Exit 11: In 2000, ConnDOT concluded an analysis of the need to upgrade I-84 from the New York border to the Housatonic River. Significant improvements were proposed for Exit 11, including a ConnDOT proposal to provide a direct link to the I-84 onramps through a redesigned intersection with Toddy Hill Road, addressing morning peak hour congestion and safety issues on this roadway segment.

Wasserman Way: Wasserman Way is a new State numbered (SR 490 and SR 860) roadway connecting Route 34 and I-84 Exit 11 on the east with Queen Street, Mile Hill Road and Route 25 on the west. ConnDOT classifies Wasserman Way as a collector road. The portion of Wasserman Road from Route 34 to Nunnawauk Road is SR 490. SR 490 continues on Nunnawauk Road from Wasserman Way to the Garner Correctional Facility. The portion of Wasserman Way from Nunnawauk Road to Mile Hill Road is SR 860. A ConnDOT commuter parking lot with 78 spaces is located on the east side of Wasserman Way, between Route 34 and the I-84 ramps.

Wasserman Way was constructed at the Town's request to develop an alternate route serving the central area of Newtown. It passes adjacent to the former Fairfield Hills Hospital Campus. Based upon 2001 and 2010 Average Daily Traffic (ADT) volumes recorded by ConnDOT, the construction of this roadway has been well received by motorists. The need for future improvements to the intersections along Wasserman Way are part of the Fairfield Hills Master Planning process, which should be incorporated into the POCD as they are completed.

Glen Road

Glen Road is a State numbered road (SR 816) and is classified by ConnDOT as a minor collector road. At one time Glen Road was a part of Route 6, the major east-west arterial serving Newtown. Glen Road provides secondary access to Southbury, bridging the Housatonic River. Traffic volumes on Glen Road increase substantially whenever I-84 is clogged up due to accidents or construction activity. Glen Road passes through the narrow northern end of the Pootatuck River valley and this section of roadway has been long recognized for its scenic qualities.

The state Department of Transportation's (DOT) \$6 million project to structurally improve the Glen Road bridge that spans the Lake Zoar section of the Housatonic River from Sandy Hook to Southbury likely will not start until the Spring of 2014. The bridge, which carries the unmarked State Route 816 across the river, is listed as structurally deficient, resulting in the span receiving

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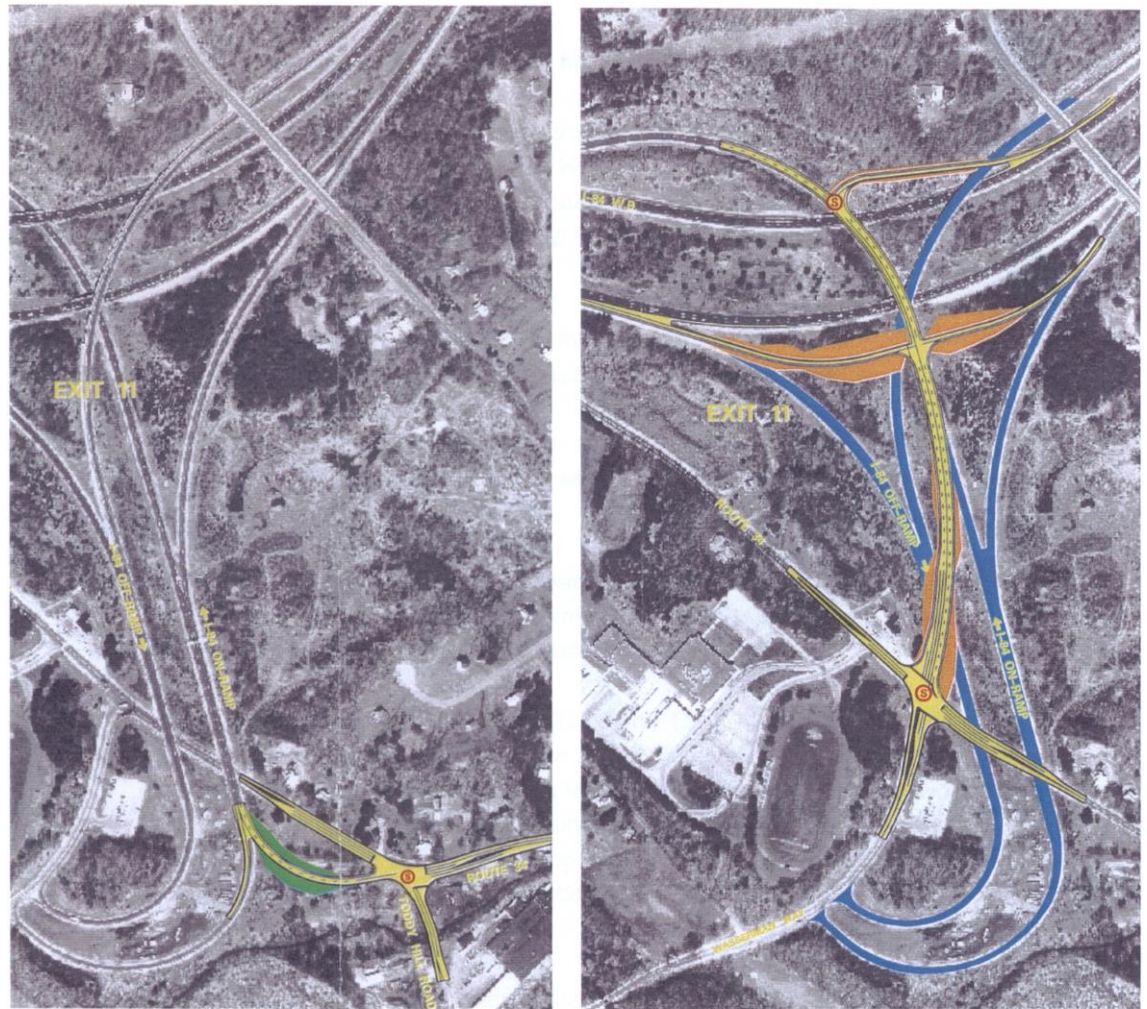
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a "poor" rating from the DOT, requiring that it be rehabilitated. The span was constructed in 1936. The DOT performed a major improvement project on the bridge in 1986. The two-lane, 308-foot-long truss-style bridge is painted a medium-brown color, with extensive patches of surface rust apparent across its steel members. In the past, the bridge was painted a silvery color, giving rise to its nickname of "The Silver Bridge."

The bridge is listed on the Connecticut Historic Bridge Inventory and is eligible for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. The span carries about 3,100 vehicles daily.

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EXCERPTS FROM THE CONN DOT 2000 I-84 UPGRADING PLAN CONCERNING EXIT 11
IN NEWTOWN. INTERIM IMPROVEMENT AT LEFT, LONG RANGE IMPROVEMENT AT RIGHT



Figure 17 ConnDOT Proposals for Improvements to I-84 Exit 11

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“The Flagpole”

The Flagpole in the middle of the Main Street intersection of Route's 6 and 25 and the two legs of West Street has been described as the “emotional heart” of Newtown. The Flagpole, sometimes referred to as the “Liberty Pole,” and its predecessors date from 1876. The current 100 foot high flagpole was erected in 1950.

Because the Flagpole sits in the middle of a busy intersection with five roadway legs, it has been the site of many accidents, which tragically include fatalities.

Over the years, proposals to improve safety at this intersection, such as moving the Flagpole out of the roadway or signalizing the intersection, have been met with resistance from the Community because they would adversely affect the historic community character of this intersection. One proposal to improve safety and the flow of traffic at this intersection, which has not been formally pursued, is the creation of a modern roundabout that would feature the Flagpole as a prominent community monument in the middle of a landscaped circle, in the middle of the roundabout. Modern roundabouts are not traffic circles or rotaries. They are increasingly used successfully to address the issues of traffic flow, traffic safety and community character. This proposal was advanced by HVCEO in the 2002 Inventory of Newtown Traffic Issues. No action to date has been taken on this proposal.

Local Road Issues

Newtown has 268 miles of local roads. While Newtown has many miles of new roads built to serve the numerous subdivisions developed during the past thirty years, most of Newtown's local collector roads serving the new subdivisions are considerably older. These older, narrower collector roads were originally built to handle low volumes of traffic traveling at relatively low speeds.

The Town has recognized the necessity to upgrade its local road network to meet the needs of a growing community, addressing such issues as drainage and bridge improvements, road bed and pavement improvements, road alignments, sightlines and intersections. In a community that has grown as rapidly as Newtown, some local roads and intersections that were once adequate to handle traffic can develop safety issues. When these issues arise, the Town addresses them in a manner that protects the safety of the traveling public. Funds continue to be allocated for this purpose.

The Town can implement traffic flow improvements by installing sequential traffic lights that minimize traffic congestion and reduce energy consumption and emissions.

Delays on traffic lights located at the Borough center will permit pedestrians to cross safely.

The top three priorities for the Newtown Traffic Unit are:

- Route 34 – I-84 Exit 11: A direct link to the I-84 onramps through a redesigned intersection with Toddy Hill Road would address the morning peak hour congestion and safety issues on this roadway segment.
- Realignment of Edmond Road and Commerce Road: A realignment of these two roads into a four-way intersection would alleviate the traffic conflict at the existing intersections and improve traffic flow.
- South Main Street Turning Lane: Turning lanes at frequent bottlenecks would permit the free flow of traffic in the areas of businesses which draw a large amount of vehicular traffic, for example the Citgo Station where a high frequency of accidents occur.

Pole Bridge Road: An example of an intersection that is no longer adequate to safely handle increased levels of traffic is the intersection of Pole Bridge Road with Jeremiah and Philo Curtis

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Roads. The Newtown Police Department, the Town Engineer and the Public Works Director has identified this intersection as possessing safety issues related to sightlines, road alignment and traffic control. These issues have been improved as a result of “traffic calming” stop signs.

Queen Street at Glover Avenue: The Queen Street and Glover Avenue corridor is used as a shortcut for traffic moving between Church Hill Road and Route 25 south and Route 302 west. The problems associated with the intersection of Queen Street and Glover Avenue have been documented by the Town Engineer, the Director of Public Works and the Police Chief. Solutions to the traffic safety issues associated with this intersection have been advanced, including signalization, but none have gained favor as they would have resulted in alterations to the “island” located in the middle of this intersection, altering the character of the adjacent residential neighborhood. It is recommended that an analysis of past traffic accidents and future traffic volumes be performed and that design alternatives for this intersection be prepared, with public involvement, to result in safety improvements to this intersection that are sensitive to the residential characteristics of the adjacent neighborhood.

In 2012 three speed tables were installed in the residential section of Queen Street to slow traffic down.

As Newtown continues to grow, additional segments of the Town’s existing roadways and intersections will need to be improved to handle increased traffic volumes. The process to address these needs appears to be well established.

Scenic Roads

Newtown has a scenic road ordinance for Town roads that was adopted in 1997, with revisions in 1999. The purpose of the ordinance is to “...provide a balance between the need to provide safe and convenient public transportation as well as other public safety needs along with preserving the scenic and rural values.”

Newtown’s scenic roads include: Sanford Road, which is a narrow, winding dirt road extending from Tamarack Road to Echo Valley Road; Zoar Road, also a narrow winding dirt road running from Route 34 to Bennetts Bridge Road; the 4,000’ unpaved portion of Pond Brook Road, between Hanover Road and Lake George Road; and the portion of Sherman Road approved in 2009.

4. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BUS AND RAIL SERVICE

The Housatonic Area Regional Transit District (HART) is the entity responsible for providing fixed-route and elderly and disabled public transit service within the Housatonic Valley Region. Newtown is not currently served by fixed-route bus service. The nearest fixed-route bus service ends at the Bethel town line, on Route 6. HART does provide “SweetHART” bus transportation service for Newtown’s seniors (age 60 or older) and persons of any age with disabilities. SweetHART provides door-to-door bus service Monday thru Friday, from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, with a dial-a-ride reservation system.

There have been considerations for establishing fixed-route bus service in Newtown. In 1993, HART prepared for HVCEO the Newtown/New Fairfield Bus Service Feasibility Plan. This report recommended a trial demonstration of fixed-route bus service that would serve major traffic generators such as the senior center, Church Hill Road, Queen Street, Main Street, Nunnawauk Meadows and Route 25 as far south as Sand Hill Plaza. This service would represent an extension of HART’s Route 6 bus line in Bethel. No action was taken on this proposal.

Rail Service

In the early 1900’s Newtown had an extensive system of rail lines and historic accounts indicate 153 freight and passenger trains stopped or passed through Newtown daily. Today, Newtown

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has one rail line, the Maybrook Line, which originates in Beacon, New York and ends in Derby, Connecticut. This line is used exclusively for rail freight service. The Maybrook Line intersects with other rail lines, which provide connectivity to the national network of rail lines and rail services.

The Maybrook Line enters Newtown in the Hawleyville area, passes through the east side of the Borough, continues east of Route 25 to the Botsford area where it turns southeasterly to the Stevenson section of Monroe. The Connecticut portion of the Maybrook Line is owned by the Housatonic Railroad Company, which currently provides rail freight service to two Newtown companies; Rand-Whitney Containers on Edmond Road and Georgia Pacific warehouse, located at 201 South Main Street. There are four additional railroad sidings connected to Newtown business locations, which are not in current use.

Shepaug Reload Center

The Housatonic Railroad Company also owns and operates the Shepaug Reload and Distribution Center, which is located in Hawleyville, on the east side of Route 25. This facility enables area lumberyards to pick-up bulk shipments of lumber.

Hawleyville Transload Terminal

The Housatonic Railroad Company shut this facility down in 2012 due to environmental concerns and its future is uncertain.

Passenger Service

The 1997 I-84 Hawleyville Transportation and Development Study examined the potential for passenger rail service in Newtown. That analysis concluded that there was not enough potential rail ridership to justify an extension of Danbury Branch Line rail service to Newtown.

5. PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION AND BIKEWAYS

Considerable interest has been expressed for improved pedestrian facilities, especially as it relates to activities within the Borough and the Sandy Hook Village area.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks have been constructed on Main Street, Glover Avenue, and parts of Queen Street and Church Hill Road. The Town and the Borough have completed a planning process that resulted in proposals for improved pedestrian movement along Queen Street.

A planning study for the revitalization of the Sandy Hook Village area has been completed with recommendations calling for improvements that will result in enhanced pedestrian mobility and safety. The Planning and Zoning Commission has endorsed recommendations for pedestrian improvements to Queen Street in the Borough and the Sandy Hook Village area to be incorporated in the POCD.

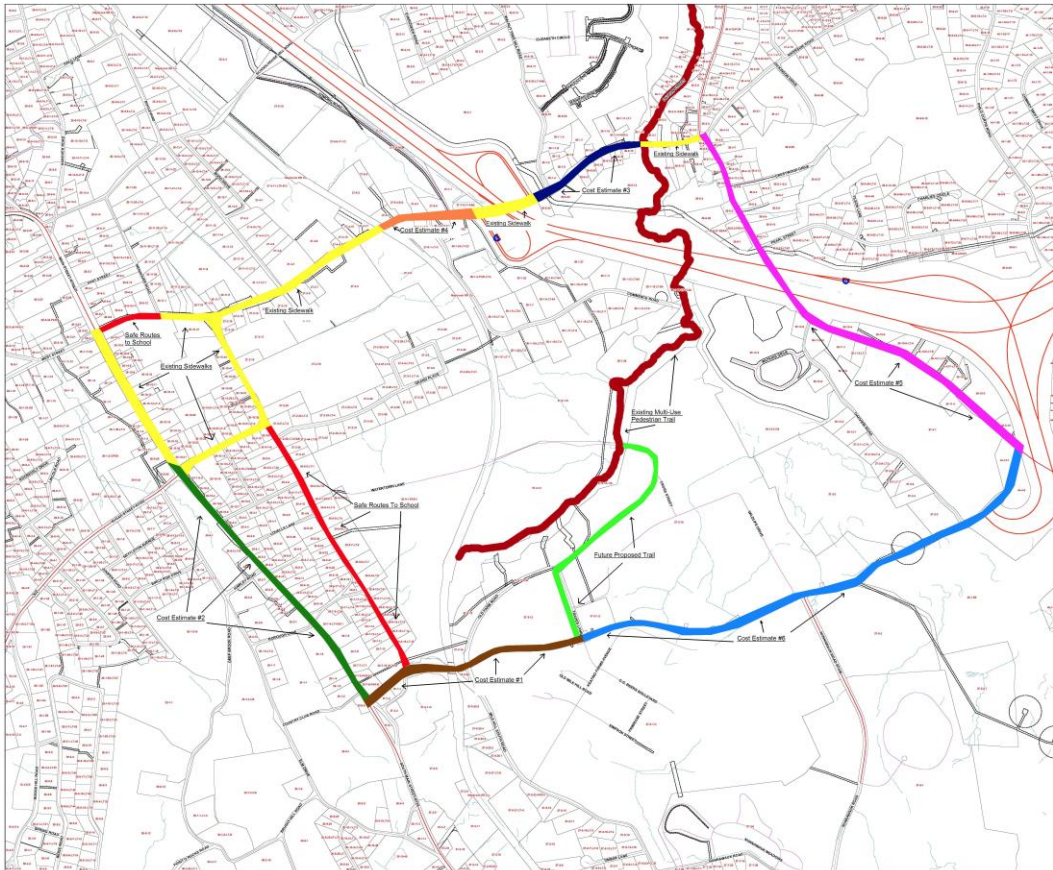
An amendment to the Subdivision Regulations was passed in 2012 requiring the sidewalks by provided for all new subdivisions.

The Town of Newtown Sidewalk Plan is shown in Figure 13. A grant has been requested from the "Safe Routes to School Program" to install the sidewalks that connect schools.

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Figure 18

Town of Newtown Sidewalk Plan



Rob Sibley
December 2011



1 inch = 390 feet

0 450 900 1,800 2,700 3,600
Feet



Trails

Because of Newtown's low-density character, most local roads do not have sidewalks. However, Newtown has a very extensive network of walking trails that have been documented in a booklet prepared by Mary Mitchell and Albert Goodrich and published by the Cyrenius H. Booth Library. This booklet, titled *Newtown Trails Book*, contains 18 detailed maps that identify the location and condition of publicly accessible walking trails.

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The popular Al's Trail is a multi-purpose trail between Fairfield Hills and the Upper Paugussett State Forest. This trail facilitates a pedestrian connection between Fairfield Hills and the Sandy Hook Village Center, as well as to the Upper Paugussett State Forest.

Bikeways

There are currently no dedicated bikeways within Newtown. Suggestions have been raised concerning the extension of the Monroe rails to trails pedestrian/bikeway facility into Newtown and there was a proposal for the construction of a bike lane on Glen Road (SR 816) that would connect the Sandy Hook Village center with Southbury. This latter proposal has not moved forward, as there are no accurate maps of the right of way along this State numbered road that would permit preliminary engineering work and the development of cost estimates to assess the feasibility of this idea.

6. ACCESS MANAGEMENT

In 2010 an Access Management and Curb Cut Study was completed for Routes 6, portions of Route 25 and Church Hill Road to offer access management tools to help preserve and enhance the character, capacity, and safety of travel along these major travel corridors. This access management plan identifies opportunities to enhance existing access patterns as well as optimal locations for new access points to land along these corridors.

Access management is the process of overseeing access to land development while simultaneously preserving the flow of traffic on the surrounding roadway system in terms of safety and capacity. Its focus is on safety of travel and minimizing conflict points or locations where vehicles can cross paths thus helping to maintain the smooth flow of traffic along a roadway.

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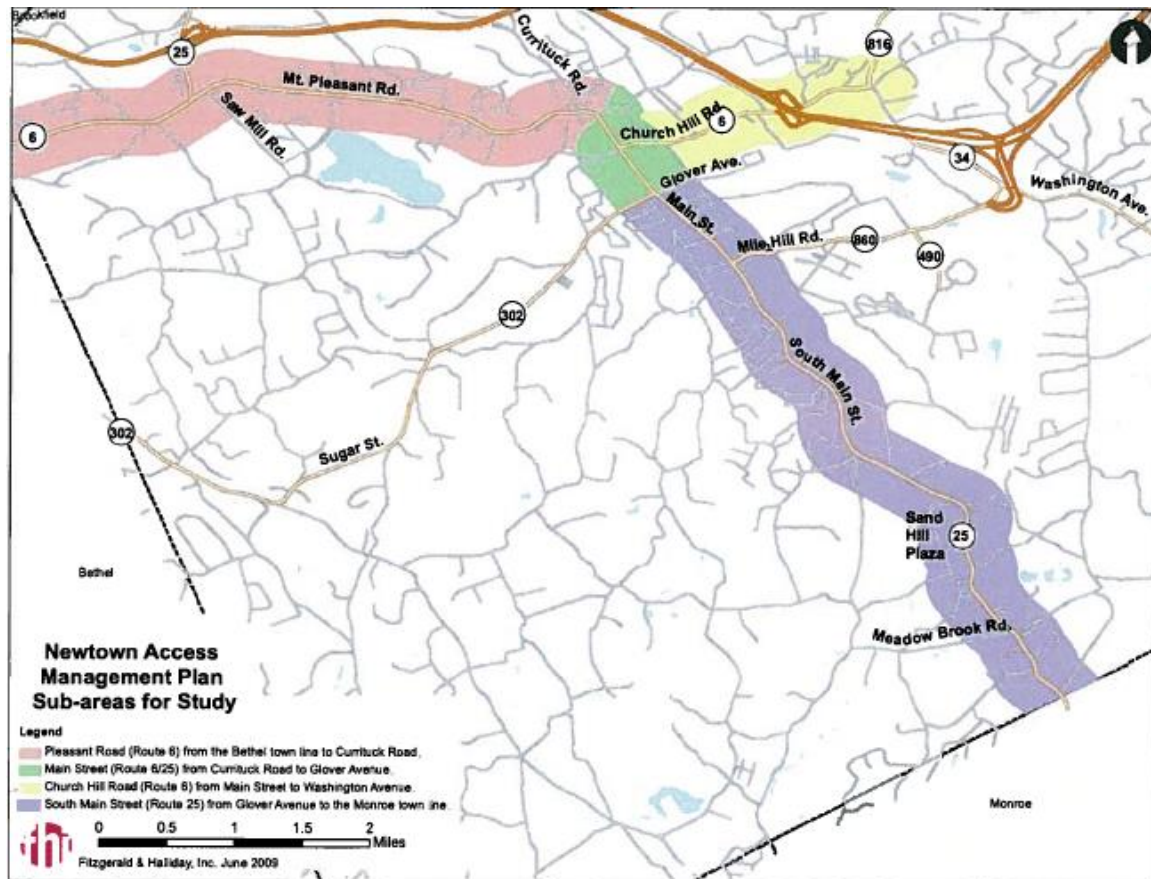


Figure 19 Newtown Access Management Plan Sub-Areas for Study

Access management has been practiced in Newtown with an access driveway between the Big Y Shopping Plaza and the Church Hill Road Office and Retail Complex, a proposed access way between Sand Hill Plaza and Plaza South, and a proposed access way between the Caraluzzi Shopping Plaza and the new planned Lexington Gardens Shopping Plaza.

This thorough analysis is available on the Town web site and the recommendations from this study can be found there.